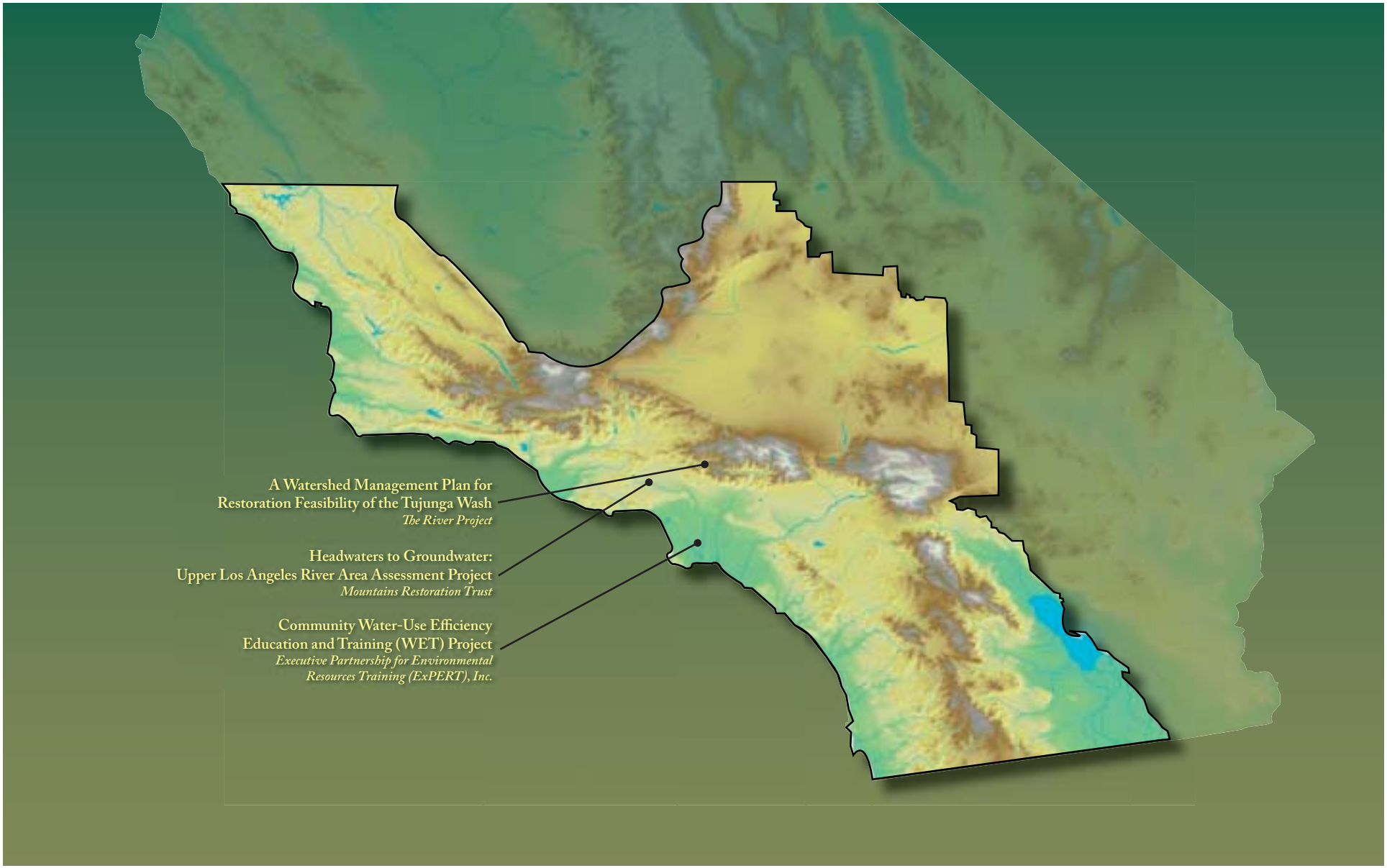
A Watershed Management Plan for
Restoration Feasibility of the Tujunga Wash
The River Project
Headwaters to Groundwater:
Upper Los Angeles River Area Assessment Project
Mountains Restoration Trust
Community Water-Use Efficiency
Education and Training (WET) Project
Executive Partnership for Environmental
Resources Training (ExPERT), Inc.

Alluvial fan scrub in Big Tujunga Wash.

Award Amount
$650,000

Watershed
Los Angeles River Watershed

County
Los Angeles County

CALFED Region
Southern California Region

Legislative Districts
US Congress: 26, 27, and 29; State Assembly: 38, 39, 42, and 43; State Senate: 17, 20, and 23

Purpose

Develop a stakeholder-driven comprehensive watershed management plan to improve water management for beneficial uses and to restore ecological health

Project Goals

- Develop a watershed assessment and watershed management plan to reduce dependence on imported water supplies through improved water quality and ecosystem health
- Implement a broad-based watershed community education and outreach program
- Improve collaboration among agencies and organizations
- Improve stakeholder capacity to be fully involved in implementing watershed management

Benefits to the Bay-Delta System

The Tujunga Wash watershed is located in the Los Angeles area, a region that imports large amounts of Bay-Delta water and will benefit from improved local water supply. This project develops a watershed management plan intended to reduce water supply demand from the Bay-Delta system through the capture and conservation of an annual average of up to 5,000 acre-feet of stormwater in the Tujunga Wash watershed. This project also quantifies local water quality improvements by demonstrating the potential to eliminate pollutant loading from runoff to the Los Angeles River. The project's outreach and education component enables local citizens to participate directly in development of the plan and in making informed decisions for enhancing water quality, water supply, and habitat. When complete, the watershed management plan may act as a template for regional implementation of similar efforts that could produce a large cumulative reduction in dependence on Bay-Delta water supplies.

Project Overview

The Tujunga Wash is the largest subwatershed of the upper Los Angeles River watershed, located in the northeast San Fernando Valley. The 225-square-mile Tujunga Wash watershed comprises remote open space areas of the Angeles National Forest and highly urbanized lands of the City of Los Angeles. Although Los Angeles averages only 15 inches of annual rainfall, the upper Los Angeles River watershed receives some of the most concentrated rainfall in the United States (as much as 26 inches in 24 hours). Under current conditions, as much as 80% of stormwater from the Los Angeles River watershed is discharged into the ocean, carrying contaminant loads from urbanized land use. The area's largely impervious, heavily urbanized lower watershed is located above the San Fernando groundwater basin, which is not recharging at its full capacity. The depleted basin currently provides 15% of local drinking water supplies to Los Angeles. The Tujunga Wash provides as much as 20% of the total flow of the Los Angeles River, and 100% of the water to the San Fernando groundwater basin. The Tujunga Wash watershed provides significant opportunities to maximize recharge, optimize reuse, improve water quality, and reduce reliance on imported water from the Bay-Delta system.

This project develops a comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for the Tujunga Wash to restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses in the watershed. The plan identifies multiple benefits for the watershed ranging from enhanced regional water supply and quality to restoration of Tujunga Wash.

An ongoing education and outreach program is generating stakeholder interest in participating in the development of the watershed management plan. The project Planning Team, Stakeholder Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee are identifying goals and objectives for the watershed, compiling a GIS inventory of existing data, developing a watershed assessment, and identifying criteria to evaluate the ongoing success of the plan. Several interconnected models will be developed to assess hydrologic conditions and evaluate the potential benefits of proposed alternatives. When complete, the plan will identify actions, programs, and projects to improve the healthy functioning of the watershed; guide agencies and stakeholders in implementing the plan; and recommend project implementation priorities for the next 20 years.

Tujunga Wash in the lower watershed.

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Community Water-Use Efficiency Education and Training (WET) Project

Executive Partnership for Environmental Resources Training (ExPERT), Inc.

Project participants review system water audit and sonic leak detection data.

Award Amount
$754,600

Watershed
Compton Creek Watershed

County
Los Angeles County

CALFED Region
Southern California Region

Legislative Districts
US Congress: 35 and 37; State Assembly: 51, 52, 53, and 55; State Senate: 25, 27, and 28

Purpose

Educate local and regional community members and stakeholders on multiple watershed issues while promoting water-use efficiency and water conservation

Project Goals

- Build community watershed management capacity
- Identify and pursue opportunities to achieve environmental justice objectives
- Develop and deliver a comprehensive watershed awareness education and outreach campaign
- Recruit and train residents of the watershed to provide sustainable leadership on issues of resource management
- Reduce demands on water supply from the Bay-Delta

Benefits to the Bay-Delta System

The WET project focuses on raising awareness of environmental justice, watershed, and water-use efficiency issues in the Compton Creek watershed, a low-income, minority neighborhood of Los Angeles. This project addresses environmental justice goals of the CALFED Program by empowering an underprivileged community to take action toward improving its environment by facilitating the formation of sustainable community groups. Implementation of water conservation and reuse measures is a significant benefit in Southern California, a region that imports large amounts of Bay-Delta water. This project addresses water-use efficiency and water quality concerns by educating citizens about and implementing several water-use improvements, with resulting benefits both locally and to other users of limited water from the Delta. Through this project, 27,701,500 gallons of potable water per year will be conserved, thus reducing the amount of water exported from the Bay-Delta.

Project Overview

The Compton Creek watershed is a 42-mile-long tributary to the Los Angeles River located in the highly urbanized, low-income Southern California communities of Compton, Lynwood, South Gate, Watts/Willowbrook, and Harbor Gateway. Compton Creek is a highly polluted stream, and is listed in the *Clean Water Act 303(d)* list of impaired waters for trash, copper, lead, pH and coliform bacteria. Local residents rely on water imported from the Bay-Delta system by the Metropolitan Water District for their municipal needs.

The Community Water-Use Efficiency Education and Training (WET) Project seeks to increase local learning and awareness across multiple watershed issues, coordinate collaboration at the local and regional levels, and assist residents and businesses to develop and implement local watershed management actions. Integral to this project is an extensive outreach program that broadens the community's understanding of how the ecological health of their watershed affects the quality of their lives. This outreach program fosters substantive discussion of water resources management and environmental justice issues, and increases the level of community actions to change patterns of water use. Recruitment and training of local "community watershed ambassadors" ensures sustainable leadership within the community on issues related to the management of watershed resources for the long term.

The WET project provides several measures for eliminating unnecessary water loss with simple implementations. The measures include conducting 200 residential water-use surveys, 200 residential plumbing retrofits, 1,000 residential or small commercial meter reads/retrofits, and 2,000 ultra low flush toilet retrofits, as well as performing leak detection on 50–70 miles of main. The WET project anticipates a total potable water savings of more than 27 million gallons per year.

Dismantled cast-off toilets from residential retrofits are recycled for roadbed construction to reduce landfill waste.

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A view of the urbanized portion of the Los Angeles River watershed from the Santa Susana Hills.

Award Amount
$399,650

Watershed
Los Angeles River Watershed

County
Los Angeles County

CALFED Region
Southern California Region

Legislative Districts
US Congress: 30, State Assembly: 41, State Senate: 23

Purpose

Conduct research to determine an effective means to increase groundwater recharge and develop an assessment that will quantify potential reduction in water demand from the Bay-Delta system

Project Goals

- Provide information to watershed agencies and groups on how to decrease dependency on Delta-derived water by supplementing groundwater
- Protect existing infiltration areas to increase recharge of high quality native water
- Raise local and regional awareness of the importance of high quality native water recharge to groundwater basins
- Encourage jurisdictional agencies, local stakeholders, and community groups to incorporate the findings of the research into watershed planning, land use policy, and community outreach

Benefits to the Bay-Delta System

Headwaters to Groundwater is a research project that assesses the potential for developing a dependable local water supply system in the Upper Los Angeles River watershed that can reduce the dependency on water imported from the Bay-Delta system. Increasing groundwater recharge with high quality native water reduces reliance on the entire Bay-Delta system to supply the water needs of Los Angeles River watershed residents. The decreased dependence on Delta-derived water assists in protecting the beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta system and meets the CALFED objectives of ecosystem quality and water supply reliability. Research derived from this project will encourage jurisdictional agencies, local stakeholders, and community groups to refine existing plans and incorporate the findings into watershed planning, land use policy, and community outreach. This project has the potential to be replicated in other watersheds and stands to provide a large cumulative benefit to the Bay-Delta system.

Project Overview

The San Fernando Valley groundwater basin, a source of drinking water for more than 600,000 residents of Los Angeles, Glendale, and Burbank, is threatened by dropping water levels, pollution, and recharge areas that have been replaced by urban development. Bay-Delta water is imported to mitigate the water supply needs compounded by these issues.

The geographical area covered by this project comprises approximately 33,000 acres in the western end of the Upper Los Angeles River area, including the undeveloped sections of the Santa Susana Mountains, Simi Hills, and Santa Monica Mountains. This focus area has not been covered in any planning or assessment efforts to date, as emphasis has been on the main channel of the Los Angeles River and the Sun Valley subwatershed. This project identifies areas that currently recharge quality native water to the local water source and provides opportunities to increase infiltration of unimpaired water from an undeveloped area to the local water source. The project integrates science-based data into the existing watershed plans of jurisdictional agencies and local watershed groups. The project will raise local awareness of water management issues and lead to better-informed watershed stewardship. This research will assist in the management of the watershed as a whole by fostering an understanding of the role natural lands play in the health of local water supplies.

A research advisory committee will ensure that the results of this project are based on sound science and can be replicated in other watersheds. The prime task of the project is to conduct a recharge suitability analysis in order to determine critical areas in need of protection and enhancement. A watershed assessment will include an analysis for contaminants. Water quality is monitored to determine the health of streams and whether the streams contribute pollutants to groundwater and the Los Angeles River. Biotic surveys are conducted to avoid any negative impacts on high quality habitat. Following the analysis, recommendations will be made and circulated for potential incorporation into existing and future planning efforts.

Undeveloped open space in the Los Angeles River watershed.

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